A RELATION OF THE FEARFVL ESTATE OF Francis Spira,

In the year 1548.

Compiled by *Natth. Bacon*, Esq.

The backſlider in heart ſhall be filled with his own waies, Prov. 14.14.

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A RELATION of the fearfull estate of *Francis* SPIRA.

IN the year 1548. when the glorious Sun of the Gospel was but newly risen in *Europe*; in the days of the raign of *Edward*, the Sixth of that name, King of ENGLAND: In the Territorie, and under the Iurisdiction of the City of *Venice*, being the very border of *Italy*, in the town of *Catta-*

della, lived one *Francis Spira*, a Civill Lawyer, an Advocate of great rank and esteem, being of known learning, and eloquence; of great experience; of carriage circumspect and severe; his speech grave and composed; his countenance sharpe and austere; every way befitting that authority whereunto he was advanced; endowed with outward blessings, of wife, and eleven children, and wealth in abundance: what his worst parts were, I have no other warrant then his own words, which (if not tainted overmuch with the bitterness of a desperate minde, and bearing the countenance rather of passion, then of sober confession) may seem to adde a period to all further commendations.

"*I was* (ſaith he) *exceſsive-*
"*ly covetous of mony, and ac-*
"*cordingly I applied my ſelf to*
"*get by injuſtice, corrupting ju-*
"*ſtice by deceit, inventing tricks*
"*to delude juſtice: good cauſes I*
"*either defended deceitfully, or*
"*ſold them to the adverſary per-*
"*fidiouſly; ill cauſes I maintai-*
"*ned with all my might; I wit-*
"*tingly oppoſed the known truth,*
"*and the truſt committed unto*
"*mee, I either betrayed or per-*
verted. Thus having worn out forty four yeares, or there abouts, and the news of the new, or rather newly revived opinions of *Luther* comming into thoſe parts, repreſented an object of novelty unto him; who being as deſirous to know, as he was famous for knowledg; ſuffered not theſe wandring opinions to

pass unexamined; but searching into the Scriptures, and into all books of Controversie that he could get, both old and new; and finding more then fame or opinion, he began to taste their nature so well, as he entertains, loves, and ownes them at length; and with such zeal, as he became a professor, yea a teacher of them; first to his wife, children, and family; and after to his friends, and familiar acquaintance; and in comparison, seemed to neglect all other affaires; intending ever to press this main point, that *We must wholly, and only depend on the free, and unchangeable love of God in the death of Christ, as the only sure way to salvation*: and this was the summe of all his discourse: and this continued for the space of

of ſix years, or thereabouts; even ſo long as this fire could keep it ſelf within private walles; but at length, it brake forth into publique meetings; ſo as the whole Province of *Padua* dawned by the luſtre thereof. The Clergie finding the trade of their pardons to decay; and their Purgatory to wax cold, began to beſtirre themſelves; gloſing their actions, firſt, with calumnious aſperſions upon the whole profeſſion; then more plainly ſtriking at *Spira* with grievous accuſation. And to effect their purpoſe, ſome promiſe labour, others favour, ſome advice, others maintenance; all joyn to divide, either his ſoul from his body, or both from God.

Now was *Iohn Caſa*, the Popes Legate, reſident at *Ve-*

nice, being by birth a *Florentine*; and one that wanted neither malice againſt thoſe of this way, nor craftineſs to effect his malicious purpoſes; To him theſe men repaire with out-cries againſt *Spira*; that he was the man that condemned the received rites of the Church; deluded the Eccleſiaſtical power, and ſcandalized the policie thereof; one of no meane rank; being a man of Account and authority, and therunto, learned in the Scriptures, elegant in ſpeech; and in one word, a dangerous *Lutheran*; having alſo many diſciples, and therefore not to be deſpiſed.

At this began the *Legate* to caſt his eye on the terrible alteration that lately had happened in *Germany*; where, by the meanes

means of one onely *Luther*, the Romiſh Religion had ſuffered ſuch a blow, as that it could neither be cured by diſſimulation, nor defended by power; but the Clergy muſt either mend their manners, or loſe their dignities: on the other ſide, when he ſaw how propenſe the common people, inhabiting in the bordering countries of *Italy*, were to entertain thoſe new opinions, he now thought it no time to diſpute, or perſwade; but with ſpeed repairs to the *Senate*, and procures authority from them to ſend for *Spira*.

Spira by this time had conſidered with himſelf of the nature of his carriage, how evident and notorious it was, and therefore ſubject to be envied by ſuch, as neither liked his

his perſon not religion; he perceived that his opinions were neither retired nor ſpeculative, but ſuch as aimed at the overthrow of the *Romiſh* Faction, and a change of policie; wherein at the beſt, he could expect but a bloudy victory; and that his enemies wanted neither power nor occaſion, to call him to account in publique: when he muſt either Apoſtatize, and ſhamefully give his former life, yea his own conſcience, the lie, or endure the utmoſt malice of his deadly enemies; or forſake his wife, children, friends goods, authority & yea, his deare Country; and betake himſelf to a forraign people, there to endure a thouſand miſeries, that do continually wait upon a voluntary exile.

Being

Being thus diſtracted, and toſſed in the reſtleſs waves of doubt, without guide to truſt to, or haven to fly to for ſuccour; on the ſuddain, Gods Spirit aſſiſting, he felt a calme, and began to diſcourſe with himſelf, in this manner.

Why wandreſt thou thus in uncertainties, unhappy man? caſt away fear, put on thy ſhield, the ſhield of faith; Where is thy wonted courage, thy goodneſs, thy conſtancy? remember that Chriſts glory lies at the ſtake: ſuffer thou without fear, & he will defend thee, he will tel thee what thou ſhalt anſwer; he can beat down all danger, bring thee out of priſon, raiſe thee from the dead; conſider Peter *in the dungeon, the Martyres in the fire; if thou makeſt a good confeſſion, thou muſteſt indeed go to priſon, or death but an eternal reward in heaven*

remains

remaines for thee; What hast thou in this world comparable to Eternal life, to everlasting happiness? if thou doest otherwise, think of the scandal; (common people live by example, thinking what ever is done, is well done;) fear the loss of peace and joy, fear hell, death, and eternal wrath; or if thy flesh bee so strong, as to cause thee to doubt of the issue, fly thy Countrey; get thee away, though never so far, rather then deny the Lord of life.

Now was *Spira* in reasonable quiet, being resolved to yield to these weighty reasons; yet holding it wisedom to examine all things, he consults also with flesh and bloud; thus the battaile doth renew, and the flesh begins in this manner: *Be well advised, fond man; consider reasons on both sides,*

ſides, and then judg: how canſt thou thus overweene thine own ſufficiencie, as thou neither regardeſt the examples of thy Progenitors, nor the judgment of the whole Church; doeſt thou not conſider, what miſery this thy raſhneſs will bring thee unto? thou ſhalt loſe all thy ſubſtance, gotten with ſo much care and travaile; thou ſhalt undergoe the moſt exquiſite torments that malice it ſelf can deviſe; thou ſhalt be counted an heretique of all: and to cloſe up all, thou ſhalt die ſhamefully. What thinkeſt thou of the loathſome ſtinking dungeon, the bloudy axe, the burning fagot? are they delightfull? Be wiſe at length, and keepe thy life and honour; thou maieſt live to do much good to good men, as God commands thee; thou maieſt be an ornament to thy Country; and

and put case, thy Countries loss would be of small esteem with thee; Wilt thou bring thy friends also into danger? thou hast begotten children, wilt thou now cut their throats, and inhumanely butcher them, which may in time bring honour to their Countrey, glory to God, help and furtherance to his Church? goe to the Legate, weak man, freely confess thy fault, and help all these miseries. Thus did the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choak the good Seed that was formerly sown; so as fearing, he faints, and yields unto the allurements of this present world; and being thus blinded, he goes to the Legate at *Venice*, and salutes him with this news.

Having for these divers

yeares

yeares entertained an opinion concerning ſome Articles of faith, contrary to the Orthodox, and received judgment of the Church; and uttered many things againſt the authority of the Church of Rome, *and the univerſal Biſhop: I humbly acknowledg my fault and Errour, and my folly in miſleading others: I therefore yield my ſelf in all obedience, to the Supreame Biſhop, into the Boſome of the Church of Rome; never to depart again from the traditions and decrees of the holy See: I am heartily ſorry for what is paſt; and I humbly begge pardon for ſo great an offence.*

The *Legate* perceiving *Spira* to faint, he purſues him to the utmoſt; he cauſeth a recitation of all his Errors to be drawn in writing, together with

with the Confeſſion annexed to it, and commands *Spira* to ſubſcribe his name there, which accordingly he did; then the *Legate* commands him to return to his own Towne; and there to declare this Confeſſion of his, and to acknowledg the whole Doctrine of the Church of *Rome* to be holy, and true, and to abjure the Opinions of *Luther*, and other ſuch Teachers, as falſe, and heretical: *Man knowes the beginning of ſinne, but who bounds the iſſues thereof?* *Spira* having once loſt footing, goes down a maine, he cannot ſtay, nor gain-ſay the *Legate*; but promiſeth to accompliſh his whole will and pleaſure: he ſoon addreſſeth himſelf for his Iourney: and being onward in the way, be thinks

thinks himſelf of the large ſpoiles he had brought away, from the Conflict with the *Legate*: what glorious teſtimony he had given of his great faith, and conſtancy in Chriſts cauſe: and to be plain, how impiouſly he had denied Chriſt, and his Goſpel at *Venice*; and what he promiſed to do further in his own Countrey; and thus partly with feare, and partly with ſhame being confounded, he thought he heard a voyce ſpeaking unto him, in this manner.

Spira, *What doſt thou here? whither goeſt thou? haſt thou, unhappy man, given thy handwriting to the Legate at* Venice? *yet ſee thou doeſt not ſeale it in thy own countrey. Dreſt thou indeed think eternal life ſo meane,*

meane, as that thou preferr'ſt this preſent life before it? doſt thou well in preferring wife and children before Chriſt? is the windy applauſe of the people, better indeed then the glory of God; and the poſſeſſion of this worlds good more deare to thee, then the ſalvation of thine own Soul? is the ſmall uſe of a moment of time more deſireable, then eternal wrath is dreadful? Think with thy ſelf, what Chriſt endured for thy ſake; is it not equal, thou ſhouldeſt ſuffer ſomewhat for him? Remember, man, that the ſufferings of this Preſent life, are not comparable to the glory that ſhall be revealed: if thou ſuffereſt with him, thou ſhalt alſo reign with him: thou canſt not anſwer for what thou haſt already done; nevertheleſs, the gate of mercy is not quite ſhut: take heed

that

that thou heapeſt not ſin upon ſin, leſt thou repent when it will be too late.

Now was *Spira* in a wilderneſs of doubt, not knowing which way to turn him, nor what to do: yet being arrived in his own Country, and amongſt his friends, with ſhame enough he relates what he had done, and what he had further promiſed to do; and how the terror of God on the one ſide, and the terror of this world on the other ſide, did continually rack him; and therefore he deſired of them advice in this ſo doubtfull a caſe: his friends upon ſmall deliberation anſwered; that it was requiſite he ſhould take heed that he did not in any wiſe betray his wife and children, and all his friends into danger,

danger, seeing that by so small a matter as the reciting of a little Schedule, which might be done in less space then halfe an hour, he might both free himself from present danger, and preserve many that depended upon him: adding moreover, that he could get no Credit in relenting from that which he had already in greatest part performed before the Legate at *Venice*, and that in the perfect accomplishing thereof, little or no discredite could arise, more then what by the former action already he had sustained: on the other side, if he did not perform his promise made to the Legate, he could neither discharge himself of the shame which he had already incurred; nor avoyd far more

more heavy and inſupportable injuries, then probably hee ſhould have endured, if he had perſi ted obſtinately in his former Opinions.

This was the laſt blow of the battaile: and *Spira* utterly overcome, goes to the Prætor, and profers to perform his promiſe made to the Legate, who in the meane time, had taken order to have all things ready, and had ſent the inſtrument of abjuration ſigned by *Spira*, to the Prætor, by the hands of a certain Prieſt. All that night the miſerable man ware out with reſtleſs cares, without any minute of reſt; the next morning being come, he gets up, and being ready, he deſperately enters into the publique Congregation, where Maſs being finiſhed, in the preſence

presence of friends and enemies, and of the whole Assembly; being by estimation neer two thousand people, yea, and of Heaven it self, he recites that infamous abjuration, word for word, as it was written: it being done, he was fined at thirty pieces of gold, which he presently paid: five whereof were given to the Priest that brought the abjuration: the other twenty five were imployed towards the making of a *Shrine* to put the *Eucharist* in; then was he sent home, restored to his Dignities, goods, wife, and children: No sooner was he departed, but he thought he heard a direful voyce saying to him; *Thou wicked wretch, thou hast denied me, thou hast renounced the covenant of thy obedience, thou hast broken*

broken thy vow, hence Apoſtate, beare with thee the ſentence of thy eternall damnation: he trembling and quaking in body and mind, fell down in a ſwoune; relief was at hand for the body, but from that time forward, he never found any peace or eaſe of his minde; but continuing in unceſſant torments, he profeſſed that he was captived under the revenging hand of the great God: that he heard continually that feareful ſentence of Chriſt that juſt Iudg: that he knew he was utterly undone: that he could neither hope for grace, nor Chriſts interceſſion with God the Father in his behalf: thus was his fault ever heavy on his heart, and ever his Iudgment before his eies.

Now began his friends

some of them, to repent too late of their rash counsel; others not looking so high as the Iudgment of God, laid all the blame upon his Melancholicke constitution; that overshadowing his judgment, wrought in him a kind of madnes: every one censured as his fancie led him, yet for remedy all agreed in this, to use both the wholesome help of Physitians, and the pious adveic of Divines, and therefore thought it meet to convey him to *Padua*, an Universitty of note, where plenty of all manner of means was to be had: this they accordingly did, both with his wife, children, and whole family; others also of his friends accompanying him: and being arrived at the house of one *Iames Ardin*, in Saint

Saint *Leonards* Pariſh, they ſent for three Phyſitians of moſt note, who upon due obſervation of the effects, and of other Symptomes of his diſeaſe, and ſome private conference one with another, amongſt themſelves, returned their verdict in this manner, *viz.* That they could not diſcerne that his body was afflicted with any danger or diſtemper originally from it ſelf, by reaſon of the over-ruling of any humour; but that this Malady of his did ariſe from ſome griefe, or paſſion of his minde, which being over-burthened, did ſo oppreſs the ſpirits, as they wanting free paſſage, ſtirred up many ill humours, whereof the body of man is full; and theſe aſcending up into the braine, troubled the fancie;

ſhadowed the ſeat of the judgment, and ſo corrupted it: this was the ſtate of his diſeaſe, and that outward part that was viſible to the eye of nature; this they indeavoured to reform by purgatiõ, either to cõſume, or at leaſt to divert the courſe of thoſe humours from the braine; but all their skill effected nothing, which *Spira* noting ſaid: *Alas poore men, how far wide are you? do you think that this diſeaſe is to bee cured by potions? believe me there muſt be another manner of medicine, it is neither plaiſters, nor drugges, that can help a fainting ſoul caſt down with ſence of ſin, and the wrath of God; t'is onely Chriſt that muſt be the Phyſitian, and the Goſpel the ſoul Antidote.*

The Phyſitians eaſily believed

leeved him after they had underſtood the whole truth of the matter, and therefore they wiſhed him to ſeek ſome ſpiritual comfort. By this time the fame of this man was ſpred over all *Padua*, and the neighbour Country; partly for that he was a man of Eſteeme: partly becauſe as the diſeaſe, ſo the occaſion was eſpecially remarkable; for this was not done in a corner: ſo as daily there came multitudes of all ſorts to ſee him: ſome out of curioſitie onely to ſee and diſcourſe: ſome out of a pious deſire to try all meanes that might reduce him to comfort again, or at leaſt to benefit themſelves, by ſuch a ſpectacle of miſery, and of the juſtice of God. Amongſt theſe, *Paulus Vergerius* Biſhop of

Iuſtinopolis, and *Matheus Gribauldus*, deſerve eſpecially to be named, as the moſt principal labourers for this mans comfort. They find him now about fifty years of age, neither affected with the dotage of old age, nor with the unconſtant headſtrong paſſion of youth, but in the ſtrength of his experience and judgment; in a burning heate, calling exceſſively for drink; yet his underſtanding active, quick of apprehenſion, witty in diſcourſe above his ordinary manner, and judiciouſly oppoſite: his friends laboured him by all fair meanes to receive ſome nouriſhment, which he obſtinately gain-ſaying, they forcibly infuſed ſome liquid ſuſtenance into his mouth, moſt of which he ſpit out again;

gaine ; exceedingly chafing and in this fretting mood of his, ſaid : As it is true *that all things work for the beſt to thoſe that love God*; ſo to the wicked all are contrary : *for whereas a plentiful of-ſpring is the bleſsing of God, and his reward, being a ſtay to the weak eſtate of their aged parents ; to me they are a cauſe of bitterneſs and vexation; they do ſtrive to make me tire out this miſery ; I would fain be at an end ; I deſerve not this dealing at their hands ; O that I were gone from hence, that ſomebody would let out this weary Soul.*

His friends ſaluted him, and asked him, what he conceived to be the cauſe of his diſeaſe; forthwith he brake out into a lamentable diſcourſe of the paſſages formerly related, and

that with such passionate Elocution, that he caused many to weepe, and most to tremble. They contrarily, to comfort him, propounded many of Gods promises recorded in the Scripture; and many examples of Gods mercy: *My sin* (said he) *is greater then the mercy of God.*. Nay, answered they, the mercy of God is above all sin; God would have all men to be saved: *It's true* (quoth he) *hee would have all that he hath elected, to be saved; he would not have damned reprobates to be saved; I am one of that number; I know it, for I willingly, and against my knowledg denied Christ; and I feele that he hardens, and will not suffer me to hope.*

After some silence, one asked him whether he did not believe

believe that Doctrine to be true, for which he was accuſed before the Legate? he anſwered; *I did believe it when I denied it, but now I neither believe that, nor the Doctrine of the Roman Church; I believe nothing, I have no faith, no truſt, no hope; I am a Reprobate like* Cain, *or* Iudas, *who caſting away all hope of mercy, fell into diſpaire; and my friends do me great wrong, that they ſuffer me not to goe to the place of unbelievers, as I juſtly deſerve.*

Here they began ſharply to rebuke him; requiring, and charging him that in any wiſe he did not violate the mercy of God; to which he anſwered: *The mercy of God is exceeding large, and extends to all the elect; but not to me, or any like to me, who are ſcaledup*

to wrath: I tell you I deserve it, my own conscience condemnes me; what needeth any other Iudge? Christ came (said they) to take away sin, and calling for a book, they read unto him the passion of Christ; and comming to his nayling to the Crois, *Spira* said: *This indeed is comfortable to such as are elected, but as for mee wretch, they are nothing but grief and torment, because I contemned them.* Thus roaring for grief, and tossing himself up and down upon the bed as he lay, he intreated them to read no more: As *Gribauldus* was comming to see him, *Vergerius* said to *Spira*, dear Sir, here is Doctor *Gribauldus*, a godly and faithfull friend of yours, come to see you: *He is welcome* (said he) *but he shall find*

me ill : Gribauldus replyed, Sir, this is but an illuſion of the divel, who doth what he can to vexe you ; but turn you to God with your whole heart, and he is ready to ſhew you mercy ; the earth you know is full of his mercy ; it is he that hath ſaid, that as *often as a ſinner repents of his ſin, he will remember his ſins no more.* Conſider this in the example of *Peter* that was Chriſts familiar, and an Apoſtle ; and yet denied him thrice with an oath, and yet God was merciful unto him : conſider the thief that ſpent his whole life in wickedneſs, and for all that, did not God graciouſly reſpect him in the laſt minute of his life ? Is the Lords hand now ſhortned that it cannot ſave ? to this *Spira* anſwered;

If

Luk. 22. 61. *If* Peter *grieved and repented, it was becauſe Chriſt beheld him with a mercifull eye; and in that he was pardoned, it was not becauſe he wept, but becauſe God was gracious to him: but God reſpects not me, and therefore I am a reprobate: I feele no comfort can enter into my heart, there's place there but only for torments and vexings of ſpirit: I tell you my caſe is properly mine own; no man ever was in the like plight, and therefore my eſtate is fearful.*

Then roaring out in the bitterneſs of his ſpirit, ſaid: *It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God:* the violence of his paſſion and action ſutable, did amaze many of the beholders; inſomuch as ſome of them ſaid with a whiſpering voyce that he was poſſeſſed

Poſſeſſed; he overhearing it, ſaid: *doe you doubt it? I have a whole Legion of divels that take up their dwellings within me, and poſſeſſe me as their own; and juſtly too, for I have denied Chriſt.* Whether did you that willingly or not? (ſaid they.) *That's nothing to the purpoſe* (ſaid *Spira*:) *Chriſt ſaith, whoſoever denies me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven: Chriſt will not be denied, no not in word; and therefore it is enough, though in heart I never denied him.* Mat. 10. 33.

They obſerving his diſtemper to ariſe from the ſenſe and horror of the paines of hell, asked him whether he thought there were worſe paines then what he endured for the preſent; he ſaid, that he knew *there were far worſe paines then thoſe*

those that he then suffered: for the wicked shall rise to their judgment, but they shall not stand in judgment: this I tremble to think of: yet do I desire nothing more, then that I might come to that place, where I may be sure to feele the worst, and to be freed from fear of worse to come.

I but you are to consider (said one) that those opinions for which you were accused before the Legate, were impious; and therefore you are not to think you denied Christ, but rather that you confessed him, acknowledging the infallible truth of the Catholike Church. *Truely* (said he) *when I did deny those opinions, I did think them to be true, and yet I did deny them.*

Go to (said others;) now then

then believe that they are true. *Now I cannot* (ſaid he;) *God will not ſuffer mee to believe them, nor truſt in his mercy: What would you have me do? I would faine attain to this power, but cannot, though I ſhould preſently be burnt for it.* But why do you (ſaid the other) eſteem this ſo grievous a ſin, when as the learned Legate conſtrained you to it, which he ſurely would not have done, if your former opinions had not been Erroneous: no, good *Francis*, the divel beſets thee, let not therefore the grievouſneſs of thy ſin, (if any ſuch be) amaze thee. *You ſay right,* (replyed he;) *the divell hath poſſeſt me, and God hath left me to his power; for I finde, I can neither believe the Goſpel, nor truſt in Gods mercy;*

I

I have ſinned againſt the Holy Ghoſt; and God by his immutable decree, hath bound me over to perpetual puniſhment, without any hope of pardon; Rom.9. 11. and Rom.4. *It's true that the greatneſs of ſin, or the multitude of them, cannot binde Gods mercy: all thoſe many ſins that in the former part of my life I have committed, then did not ſo much trouble me, for I truſted that God would not lay them to my charge: but now having ſinned againſt the Holy Ghoſt, God hath taken away from me all power of repentance; and now brings all my ſins to remembrance,* Jam.2. 10. *and thus guilty of one, guilty of all. And therefore it's no matter whether my ſins bee great or ſmall, few or many; they are ſuch as Chriſts blood, nor Gods mercy belongs to me: God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy;* Rom.9. 18. *and*

whom

whom he will he hardneth; this is it that gnawes my heart, hee hath hardned mee; and I find that he daily more and more doth harden mee, and therefore I am out of hope; I feel it, and therefore cannot but deſpaire: I tell you, there was never ſuch a monſter as I am; never was any man alive a ſpectacle of ſo exceeding miſery. I knew that juſtification is to bee expected by Chriſt, and I denyed and abjured it: to the end I might keep this frail life from adverſitie, and my children from povertie; and now behold, how bitter this life is to mee; and God only knows, what ſhall become of this my family; but ſurely no good is likely to betide it, but rather daily worſe and worſe; and ſuch a ruine at the length, as that one ſtone ſhall not be left on another.

But

But why should you (said *Gribauldus*) conceit so deeply of your sin, seeing you can not but know, that many have denyed Christ, yet never fell into despaire? *Well* (said he) *I can see no ground of comfort for such, neither can I warrant them from Gods revenging hand in wrath; though it pleaseth God yet to suffer such to bee in peace: and besides, there will a time of danger come, and then they shall be throughly tryed: and if it were not so, yet God is just in making me an Example to others; and I cannot justly complain: there is no punishment so great, but I have deserved it, for this so heinous offence: I assure you it is no small matter to deny Christ, and yet it is more ordinary then commonly men do conceive of: it is not a denyall made before a*

Magistrate

Magiſtrate as it is with mee; for as often as a Chriſtian doth diſſemble the known truth; as often as he approves of falſe worſhip, by preſenting himſelf at it, ſo often as hee hath not things worthy of his calling, or ſuch things as are unworthy of his calling, ſo often he denyes Chriſt: thus did I, and therefore am juſtly puniſhed for it.

Your eſtate (quoth *Gribaldus*) is not ſo ſtrange, as you make it; *Job* was ſo farr gone, that he complained God had ſet him as a mark againſt him: and *David* that was a man after Gods own heart, complained often that God had forſaken him, and was become his enemy; yet both received comfort again: comfort your ſelf therefore, God will come at length, though

he

he now seem far off.

O Brother (answered *Spira*) *I believe all this; the divels believe and tremble; but* David *was ever elected and dearly beloved of God; and though he fell, yet God took not utterly away his holy Spirit; and therefore was heard when he prayed,* Lord take not thy holy Spirit from mee: *but I am in another case, being ever accursed from the presence of God: neither can I pray as he did, because his holy Spirit is quite gone, and cannot be recalled; and therefore I know I shall live in continual hardness so long as I live: O that I might feel but the least sense of the love of God to me, though but for one small moment, as I now feel his heavie wrath that burns like the torments of hell within mee, and afflicts my Conscience with pangs unutterable*

unutterable ; verily deſperation is hell it ſelf.

Here *Gribauldus* ſaid, I do verily believe, *Spira*, that God having ſo ſeverely chaſtiſed you in this life, correcteth you in mercy here, that he may ſpare you hereafter, and that he hath mercy ſealed up for you in time to come.

Nay (ſaid *Spira*) *hence do I know that I am a Reprobate, becauſe he afflicteth me with hardneſs of heart : O that my body had ſuffered all my life long, ſo that he would be pleaſed to ſave my ſoul, and eaſe my Conſcience, this burthened Conſcience.*

Gribauldus being deſirous to eaſe his mind from the continual meditation of his ſin; as alſo to ſound how for the preſent he ſtood affected to the Romiſh Church ; asked him what

what he thought became of the ſoules of men ſo ſoone as they departed out of the body; to which he anſwered.

Although this be not ſo fully revealed in Scripture; yet I verily believe that the ſoules of the Elect go preſently to the Kingdome of glory; and not that they ſleep with the body, as ſome do imagine.

Very well, ſaid one of the ſpectators, why do the Scriptures then ſay, that God brings down to hell, and raiſeth up; ſeeing it cannot be meant of the eſtate of the ſoul after death, which as thou ſayeſt, either goeth to heaven without change, or to hell without redemption: it muſt be underſtood of the eſtate of the ſoul in this life; like that wherein thou art at this preſent: and often-

oftentimes we ſee that God ſuffers men to fall into the jawes of deſpair, and yet raiſeth them up again; and therefor deſpair not, but hope; it ſhall be even thus with thee in his good time.

This is the work (quoth *Spira*) *this the labour; for I tell you, when I left* Venice *did firſt abjure my profeſsion, and ſo, as it were, drew an Indenture, the ſpirit of God often admoniſht mee; and when at* Cittadella, *I did, as it were, ſet to my ſeale; the Spirit of God often ſuggeſted to me, do not write* Spira, *do not ſeal; yet I reſiſted the Holy Ghoſt, and did both; and at that very preſent I did evidently feele a wound inflicted in my very will; ſo although I can ſay, I would believe, yet can I not ſay, I will believe; God hath denied mee the power of will;*

will ; and it befalls mee in this my miſerable eſtate, as with one that is faſt in irons, and his friends comming to ſee him, do pitie his eſtate, and do perſwade him to ſhake off his fetters, and to come out of his bonds, which God knows he would fain do, but cannot : this is my very caſe; yet perſwade me to believe : how fain would I do it, but cannot ? O now I cannot. Then violently graſping his hands together, and raiſing himſelf up: *Behold* (ſaid he) *I am ſtrong, yet by little and little I decay and conſume, and my ſervants would fain preſerve this weary life ; but at length the will of God muſt be done, and I ſhall periſh miſerably as I deſerve : rejoyce ye righteous in the Lord ; bleſſed are you whoſe hearts the Lord hath mollified.*

Pſal 32. 11.

Then

Then after ſome pauſe; *It's wonderful, I earneſtly deſire to pray to God with my heart, yet I cannot; I ſee my damnation, and I know my remedie is only in Chriſt, yet I cannot ſet my ſelf to lay hold on it; ſuch are the puniſhments of the damned: they confeſs what I confeſs, they repent of their loſs of heaven, they envie the Elect; yet their repentance doth them no good, for they cannot mend their waies.*

As hee was thus ſpeaking, he obſerved divers flies that came about him, and ſome lighted on him: *Behold,* (ſaid he) *now alſo* * *Belzebub comes to his banquet; you ſhall ſhortly ſee my end, and in mee an example to many of the Iuſtice, and Iudgment of God.*

* Signifies the god of flies.

About this time came in two Biſhops, with divers

Schollers of the Vniversity, one of them being *Paulus Vergerius*, having observed *Spira* more then any other; being continually conversant with him; told him his estate was such, as rather stood in need of prayer themselves; and therefore desired him to pray with him in the Lords Prayer; *Spira* consented, and he began.

Our Father which art in heaven, then breaking forth into teares, he stopped; but they said, it is well, your grief is a good signe: *I bewaile* (said he) *my misery, for I perceive I am forsaken of God, and cannot call to him from my heart, as I was wont to do*; yet let us go on, said *Vergerius*.

Thy kingdome come:) *O Lord* (said *Spira*) *bring me also into this kingdome; I beseech thee*

shut

ſhut mee not out. Then comming to thoſe words, *Give us this day our daily bread*; he added; *O Lord I have enough and abundance to feed this carkeiſe of mine; but there is another bread, I humbly begge the bread of thy grace; without which, I know I am but a dead man.*

Lead us not into temptation;) *ſeeing Lord that I am brought into temptation, help me Lord that I may eſcape; the enemie hath overcome, help me, I beſeech thee, to overcome this cruel Tyrant.*

Theſe things he ſpake with a mournful voyce, the teares trickling down abundantly; and expreſſing ſuch affection and paſſion, as turned the bowels of thoſe there preſent, with grief and compunction; they then turning to *Spira*, ſaid; You know that none can call

Christ Iesus the Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt: you muſt therefore think of your ſelf, according to that ſoft affection, which you expreſs in your prayers, inferring thereby that God hath not wholly caſt you off, or bereaved you of his Spirit utterly.

Pſal.109. 7. *I perceive* (ſaid *Spira*) *that I call on him to my eternal damnation: for I tell you again, it is a new and unheard of example that you find in mee*: If *Iudas* (ſaid they) had but outlived his dayes, which by nature hee might have done; he might have repented, and Chriſt would have received him to mercy; and yet he ſinned moſt grievouſly againſt his Maſter, which did ſo eſteem of him, as to honour him with the dignitie of an *Apoſtle*, and did

did maintain and feed him: He anſwered, *Chriſt did alſo feed and honour mee, neither yet is my fault one jot leſs then that of his; becauſe it is not more honour to be perſonally preſent with Chriſt in the fleſh, then to be in his preſence now, by illumination of his holy Spirit: and beſides, I deny that ever* Iudas *could have repented, how long ſoever he had lived; for grace was quite taken from him, as it is now from me.*

O *Spira* (ſaid they) you know you are in a Spiritual deſertion; you muſt therefore not believe what Satan ſuggeſts; he was ever a Liar from the beginning, and a meer Impoſtour, and will caſt a thouſand lying fancies into your mind, to beguile you withall; you muſt rather believe thoſe

whom you judg to be in a good estate, and more able to discern of you then your self; believe us, and we tell you that God will be merciful unto you.

O here is the knot (said *Spira*) *I would I could believe; but I cannot.*

Then he began to reckon up what fearful dreames and visions he was continually troubled withall; that he saw the divels come flocking into his Chamber, and about his bed, terrifying him with strange noyses that these were not fancies, but that he saw them as really, as the standers by; and that besides these outward terrours, he felt continually, a racking torture of his minde, and a continuall butchery of his Conscience, being the very

rie proper pangs of the damned wights in hell.

Caſt way theſe fancies (ſaid *Gribaldus*;) theſe are but illuſions; humble your ſelf in the preſence of God, and praiſe him.

The dead praiſe not the Lord (anſwered he) *nor they that* Pſal. 6. 5.
goe down into the pit: we that are drowned in deſpaire, are dead and already gone down into the pit: what hell can there be worſe then deſperation, or what greater punishment? the gnawing worm, unquenchable fire, horror, confuſion, and (which is worſe then all) deſperation it ſelf continually tortures me, and now I count my preſent eſtate worſe, then if my ſoul (ſeparated from my body) were with Judas *and the reſt of the damned; and therefore, I now deſire rather to lie there, then*

that to live in the bodie.

One being preſent, repeated certain words out of the *Pſalmes*: If thy Children forſake my Law, and walk not in my Iudgments; I will viſite their tranſgreſſions with rods, and their iniquities with ſtripes; nevertheleſs my loving kindneſs I will not utterly take from them, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail: mark this, O *Spira*, my Covenant I will not break.

Pſa. 89. 30.

Theſe promiſes (ſaid *Spira*) *belong only to the Elect, which if tempted, may fall into ſinne; but are again lifted up and recovered out: as the Prophet* ſaith, *though he fall, he ſhall not be utterly caſt down, for the Lord upholdeth him: therefore* Peter *could riſe, for he was Elected; but the reprobate when they fall,*

Pro. 24. 16. Pſal. 37. 24.

cannot

cannot riſe again, as appeares in Cain, Saul, *and* Iudas: *God deales one way with the Elect, and another way with Reprobates.*

The next day he prayed with them in the Latine tongue, and that with excellent affection, as outwardly appeared; bleſſed be God (ſaid *Vergerius*;) theſe are no ſignes of eternal reprobation: you muſt not, O *Spira*, ſeek out the ſecret counſels of Gods election and reprobation; for no man can know, ſo long as hee lives, whether by his good or bad deeds, he be worthy of Gods love or anger: do you not know that the Prophet *David* complained, that God had caſt off his Soul.

Eccleſ. 9. 1. Pſal. 88. 14.

I know all this (quoth *Spira*) *I know the mercies of God are infinite, and do ſurpaſs the ſins of the*

whole world, and that they are effectual to all that believe, but this faith, and this hope, is the gift of God: O that he would give it mee; but it is as impossible as to drink up the sea at a draught: As for that of Salomon, if he had ever tryed that which I feel by wofull experience, he would never have spoken as he did; but the truth is, never had mortall man such an evident experience of Gods anger and hatred against him, as I have: you that are in a good estate, think repentance and faith to be works of great facilitie: and therefore you think it an easie matter to perswade a man to believe; the whole need not the Physician; and he that is well, can soon give counsell to such as are ill; but this is the hell to mee, my heart is hardned, I cannot believe: many

are

are called, but few are chosen.

Upon what ground (said they) do you conceive so ill an opinion of your self?

I once did know God to be my Father, not only by creation, but by regeneration; I knew him by his beloved Sonne, the author and finisher of our Salvation; I could pray to him, and hope for pardon of sinnes from him; I had a tuste of his sweetnes, peace and comfort: now contrarily, I know God not as a Father, but as an enemie; what more? my heart hates God, and seeks to get above him: I have nothing else to fly to but terror and despair.

Belike you think then (said they) that those who have the earnest and first fruits of Gods Spirit, may notwithstanding fall away.

The judgments of God are a deep

Psa.36.6 Rom.11. 33. 1 Cor. 10.12.

deep abiſs (ſaid he) *we are ſoon drowned if we enter into them; he that thinks he ſtandeth, let him take heed leſt he fall: as for my ſelf, I know I am fallen back; and that I once did know the truth; though it may be not ſo throughly: I know not what elſe to ſay, but that I am one of that*

Pſal.50. 22.

number, which God hath threatned to tear in peices.

Say not ſo (anſwered they;) for God may come, though at the laſt hour; keep hold therefore, at the leaſt by hope.

This (quoth he) *is my caſe, I tell you I cannot, God hath deprived mee of hope; this brings terror to my minde, and pines this body which now is ſo weak, as it cannot perform the ſeveral offices thereof: for as the Elect*

Rom.8. 16.

have the Spirit teſtifying that they are the ſonnes of God

ſo

ſo the Reprobates, even while they live, do often feel a worme in their conſcience, whereby they are condemned already; and therefore as ſoon as I perceived this wound inflicted on my mind and will, I knew that I wanted the gifts of ſaving grace, and that I was utterly undone; God chaſteneth his children with temporarie afflictions, that they may come as gold out of the fire; but puniſheth the wicked with blindneſs in their underſtandings, and hardneſs of heart; and woe be to ſuch, from whom God takes his holy Spirit.

1 Cor. 11. 33.

Rom. 12. 28.

Iohn. 18. 42.

Here one rebuked him, and told him, hee gave too much credite to ſenſe, that he was not to believe himſelf, but rather him that was in a good ſtate, and I teſtifie to you (ſaid he) that God will be merciſull to you.

Nay (answered he) for because I am in this ill estate, therefore can I believe nothing but what is contrary to my salvation and comfort; but you that are so confident of your good estate; look that it be true, for it is no such small matter to bee assured of sincerity; a man had need be exceeding strongly grounded in the truth, before he can be able to affirm such a matter as you now do: It is not the performance of a few outward duties, but a mighty constant labor, with all invention of heart and affection; with full desire and endeavour, continually to set forth Gods glory: there must be neither fear of Legates, Inquisitors, Prisons, nor any death whatsoever; many think themselves happy that are not: it is not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, that shall go to heaven.

Mat. 7 22.

They

They came another day, and found him with his eyes ſhut, as if he had been drouzie, and very loath to diſcourſe; at which time there came in alſo a grave man from *Cittadella*, who demanded of *Spira*, if he knew him, or not; hee lifting up his eye-lids, and not ſuddenly remembring him, the man ſaid to him; *I am Presbyter Antonie Fontanina*: I was with you at *Venice*, ſome eight weeks ſince: *O curſed day* (ſaid *Spira*) *O curſed day: O that I had never gone thither; would God I had then died.*

Afterwards came in a Prieſt called, *Bernardinus Sardonens*, bringing with him a book of Exorciſmes, to conjure this divell; whom when *Spira* ſaw, ſhaking his head he ſaid:

I am verily perſwaded indeed, that

that God hath left me to the power of the divels ; but such they are, as are not to be found in your Letany ; neither will they be cast out by spells : The Prieſt proceeding in his intended purpoſe ; with a ſtrange uncouth geſture and a loud voyce, adjured the ſpirit to come into *Spira's* tongue, and to anſwer : *Spira* deriding his fruitleſs labour, with a ſigh, turned from him : A Biſhop being there preſent, ſaid to *Spira* ; brother, God hath put vertue into the word and Sacraments ; and we have uſed the one meanes, and find not that effect which we deſire ; ſhall we try the efficacie of the Sacraments? ſurely if you take it, as a true Chriſtian ought to receive the body and bloud of Chriſt, it will prove a ſoveraign medicine for your ſick ſoul.

This

This I cannot do (anſwered he;) for they that have no right to the promiſes, have no right to the ſeales: *the Euchariſt was appointed onely for believers: if we have not faith, we eate and drink judgement to our ſelves; I received it about a moneth ſince, but I did not well in ſo doing; for I took it by conſtraint, and ſo I took it to my deeper condemnation.* 1 Cor. 11. 33.

Here *Vergerius* began to importune him earneſtly to beware, that he did not wilfully reſiſt grace, and put himſelf out of Heaven; charging him vehemently, by all the love that was between them; by the love which he bare to his children, yea, to his own ſoul; that he would ſet himſelf, ſeriouſly to return to that faith and hope, which once he had in

in the death of Christ; with many such like words: *Spira* having heard much of the like matter formerly; and being somewhat moved, said, *You do but repeate*, Vergerius: *what should I hope? why should I believe? God hath taken faith from me: shew me then whither I shall go; shew me a Haven where to I shall retire: you tell me of Gods mercy, when as God hath cast me off: you tell me of Christs intercession, I have denied him: you command me to believe, I say I cannot: you bring me no comfort: your command is impossible for me to obey, as to keep the Morall Law: if you should perswade one to love God, with all his heart, soul and strength; and God gives him not the power, can he perform your desire? doth not the Church teach us to sing; direct*

reſt us, O Lord, to love thy Commandements? hypocrites ſay that they love God with all their heart, but they lye: for my part, I will not lye, but tell you plainly; ſuch is my caſe, that though you ſhould never ſo much importune mee to hope or believe, though I deſire it, yet I cannot: for God (as a puniſhment of my wickedneſs) hath taken away from me all his ſaving graces; faith, hope, and all: I am not the man therefore that you take me for: belike you think I delight in this eſtate; if I could conceive but the leaſt ſpark of hope of a better eſtate hereafter, I would not refuſe to endure the moſt heavy weight of the wrath of that great God; yea, for twenty thouſand yeares, ſo that I might at length attain to the end of that miſery, which I now know will be eternal: but I tell you, my

my

will is wounded : who longs more to beleeve, then I *doe ? but all the ground-work of my hope is quite gone ; for if the teſtimonies of holy Scripture be true, (as they are moſt certainly true) is not this as true : whoſoever denies me before men, him* (ſaith Chriſt) *will I denie before my Father which is in heaven ? is not this properly my caſe, as if it had purpoſely been intended againſt this very perſon of mine ? and I pray you, what ſhall become of ſuch as Chriſt denieth ; ſeeing there is no other Name under heaven, whereby you look to be ſaved ? what ſaith Saint* Paul *to the* Hebrews *?* Heb. 6. *it is impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightned, and have taſted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, if they fall away, to be renewed to repentance : what can be more plain*

plain againſt me? Is not that Scripture alſo; if we ſinne wilfully after we have received the knowledg of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſin; but a certain looking for of judgment: the Scripture ſpeaks of me, Saint Paul *meshes me; Saint* Peter *tell me, it had been better I had not known the way of righteouſneſs, then after I have known, to turn from the holy Commandement: it had been better I had not known, and yet then my condemnation had bee moſt certain: do you not ſee evidently, that I have wilfully denyed the known truth; may juſtly expect not onely damnation, but worſe, if worſe may be imagined? God will have mee undergoe the juſt puniſhment of my ſin, and make mean example of his wrath for your ſakes.* Heb. 10. 26. 1 Pet. 2. 21.

The

The company present, admired his discourse, so grievously accusing himself of his fore-past life; so gravely and wisely dilating, concerning the judgments of God, that they then were convinced, that it was not frenzie or madness, that had possessed him: and being as it were, in admiration of his estate, *Spira* proceeded again in this manner. "Take "heed to your selves, it is no "light or easie matter to bee a "Christian; it is not Baptisme, "or reading of the Scriptures, "or boasting of faith in Christ "(though even these are good) "that can prove one to be an "absolute Christian: you know "what I said before, there "must be a conformity in life; "a Christian must be strong, "unconquerable, not carrying "an

" an obscure profession, but re-
" solute; expressing the Image
" of Christ, and holding out a-
" gainst all opposition, to the
" last breath: he must give all
" diligence, by righteousness,
" and holiness, to make his
" calling and election sure: ma-
" ny there are that snatch at the
" promises in the Gospel, as if
" they undoubtedly did be-
" long to them; and yet they
" remaine sluggish, and care-
" less, and being flattered by
" the things of this present
" world, they pass in their
" course in quietness and se-
" curity, as if they were the
" onely happy men; whom
" nevertheless the Lord in his
" providence hath ordained
" to eternal wrath; as you
" may see in Saint *Lukes* Rich
" man: thus it was with me,
" there

Luk. 16.

" therefore take heed.

Then came one of his Nephewes, and offered him some sustenance, which he disdainfully refusing, so moved the young mans choler, that he charged him with hypocrisie and dissimulation, or frenzie; to whom *Spira* gravely answering, said:

You may interpret the matter as you will; but I am sure, I am not onely the Actor, but the argument, and matter of the Tragedy; I would it were frenzie, either fained or true; for if it were fained, I could put it off at pleasure; if it were a reall frenzie, yet there were some hope left of Gods mercie, whereas now there is none: for I know that God hath pronounced me an enemie, and guilty of high Treason against his Majestie; I am a cast-away, a vassaile

of

of wrath: yet dare you call it diſſembling and frenzy; and can mock at the formidable example of the heavy wrath of God, that ſhould teach you fear and terror: But it is natural to the fleſh, either out of malice or ignorance, to ſpeak perverſly of the Works of God: The natural man diſcerneth not of the things that are of God, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.

How can this be (ſaid *Gribaldus*) that you can thus excellently diſcourſe of the judgments of God, and of the graces of his holy Spirit, that you finde the want of them, and earneſtly deſire them; and yet you think you are utterly deprived of them.

Take this for certain (ſaid he) *I want the main grace of all, and that which is abſolutely neceſſary; and God doth many times exert*

most true and strange testimonies of his Majesties justice and mercy; yea, out of the mouthes of very reprobates; for even Judas, *after he had betrayed his Master, was constrained to confess his sin, and to justifie the innocency of Christ; and therefore if I do the like, it is no new or strange matter: God hath taken faith from me, and left me other common gifts, for my deeper condemnation: By how much the more I remember what I had, and hear others discourse of what they have, by so much the more is my torment, in that I know what I want, and how there is no way to be relieved.*

Matt. 27. 4.

Thus spake he, the tears all the while trickling down; professing that his pangs were such, as that the damned wights in hell endure not the like misery; that his estate was worse

worſe then that of *Cain* or *Judas*, and therefore he deſired to die. *Yet behold* (ſaith he) *the Scriptures are accompliſhed in me; they ſhall deſire to die, and death ſhall flie from them:* And verily, he ſeemed exceedingly to fear, leſt his life ſhould be drawn out to a longer thred; and finding no eaſe or reſt, ever and anon, cryed out, *O miſerable wretch, O miſerable wretch*; then turning to the Company, he beſought them in this maner. Revel. 9. 6.

O Brethren, take a diligent heed to your life; make more account of the gifts of Gods Spirit then I have done; learn to beware my miſery; think not you are aſſured Chriſtians, becauſe you underſtand ſomething of the Goſpel; take heed you grow not ſecure on that ground; be conſtant and im-

move ble in the maintenance of your profession: Confess even until death, if you be called thereto; He that loveth father, mother, brethers, sisters, sons, daughters, kinred, houses, lands, more then Christ, is not worthy of him.

Luke 9. 61.

These words (said they) do not sound like the words of a wicked Reprobate.

I do but herein imitate (said *Spira*) *the rich Glutton in the Gospel, who though in hell, yet was careful, that his brethren should not come to that place of torment; and I say to you Brethren, take heed of this miserable estate wherein I am.*

Then turning himself to certain young men that were present, he desired them to conceive him aright. *I do not speak this to derogate from the certainty of saving faith, and the promises of*

of the Goſpel, for they are moſt ſure; but take heed of relying on that faith that works not a holy and unblameable life, worthy of a believer; credit me, it will fail, I have tryed it: I preſumed I had gotten the right faith; I preached it to others, I had all places of Scripture in memory that might ſupport it: I thought my ſelf ſure, and in the mean time living impiouſly and carelеſly; behold, now the judgments of God have overtaken me; not to correction, but to condemnation: And now you would have me to believe, but it will not be; for I feel too late, that good things belong only to ſuch as are good; whoſe ſins are covered with Chriſts death and blood, as with a vail, and guarded with his righteous merits from the flood of Gods wrath, even as with a mighty wall, leſt miſerable mortals ſhould be ſwallowed

up with greatneſs of their ſins: But as for me, I have, as it were, wilfully with mine hands pulled down this Rampire, behinde which I might have reſted in ſafety; and now are the ſwelling waters come even to my ſoul, and I am caſt away.

One of his familiar friends chanced to ſay, That certainly he was overcome with melancholly; which being overheard, *Spira* anſwered,

Well, be it ſo, ſeeing you will needs have it ſo; for thus alſo is Gods wrath manifeſted againſt me, in that he hath taken from me the uſe of mine Underſtanding and Reaſon, ſo as I can neither rightly eſteem and judg of my diſtemper, nor hope of remedy: You ſee Brethren, what a dangerous thing it is, to ſtop or ſtay in things that concern Gods glory; eſpecially to diſſemble

ſemble upon any tearms : What a fearful thing is it, to be neer and almoſt a Chriſtian? never was the like example to this of mine; and therefore, if you be wiſe, you will ſeriouſly conſider thereof. O that God would let looſe his hand from me; that it were with me now, as in times paſt, I would ſcorn the threats of the moſt cruel Tyrants, bear torments with invincible reſolution, and glory in the outward profeſsion of Chriſt, till I wear choaked in the flame, and my body conſumed to aſhes.

You ſay, you are deſperate, O *Spira* (ſaid they,) why then do you not ſtrive with ſome weapon or other, violently to make an end of your life, as deſperate men uſe to do? *Let me have a ſword* (ſaid *Spira*,) why what would you do with it (quoth they?) *I cannot tell you* (ſaid he) *what this minde would move me to, upon occaſion, nor what I would do.*

They perceiving ſmall effect of all this their labor, but rather that he grew

worſe: For the avoiding of concourſe of people; for every day ſeldom fewer then twenty continued with him, and to ſtop the courſe of fame, which was continually blown abroad of him; they conſult to carry him back again into his own Countrey; and thoſe his friends that came to comfort him, began to take their leaves of him: *Vergerius* amongſt the reſt, required that at their parting they might pray together with him: *Spira* hardly conſented, and as unwillingly performed: For he ſaid, *My heart is eſtranged from God, I cannot call him Father from my heart; all good motions are now quite gone, my heart is full of malediction, hatred, and blaſphemy againſt God: I finde I grow more and more hardned in heart, and cannot ſtoop nor help my ſelf: Your Prayers for me ſhall turn to your own benefit, they can do me no good.*

Vergerius came to take his leave of him, whom *Spira* embracing, ſaid, *Although*

though I know that nothing can bring any benefit to me a Reprobate; but that every thing ſhall tend to my deeper condemnation: yet I give you moſt hearty thanks, for your kinde office of love and good will, and the Lord return it unto you, with a plentiful increaſe of all good.

The next day being brought down to his intended journey, by the way looking round about him with a ghaſtly look, he ſaw a knife lying on a Table, to which he running haſtily, ſnatched hold of, as intending to miſchief himſelf; but his friends laying hold of him, ſtopped him in his purpoſe: whereupon with indignation, he ſaid, *I would I were above God, for I know he will have no mercy on me.*

Thus went he homewards, often ſaying, that he envyed the condition of *Cain* and *Judas*: He lay about eight weeks in this caſe, in a continual burning, neither deſiring, nor receiving any thing but by force, and that without diſgeſtion:

diſgeſtion: ſo ſpent, that he appeared a perfect Anatomy; expreſſing to the view, nothing but ſinews and bones: vehemently raging for drink; ever pining, yet fearful to live long: dreadful of Hell, yet coveting death: in a continual torment, yet his own tormentor: And thus conſuming himſelf with grief and horror, impatience and deſpair, like a living man in hell; he repreſented an extraordinary example of the juſtice and power of God. And thus (as far as appeareth) within a few days after his arrival at his own home, he departed this preſent life: Yet an occaſion to make us remember, *That ſecret things belong unto the Lord our God*; but charity to man, to teach him to hope all things.

EXtraordinary Examples of Divine Juſtice, God never intended for a nine days wonder; elſe would he, when he exemplified *Lots* wife, have turned her

her into a statue of melting snow, not of lasting salt; which stood, as *Josephus* tels us, till his age, after the destruction of *Jerusalem*; and as some Travellers report, till at this day: *ut quoddam hominibus præstaret condimentum, quo sapiant unde illud caveatur exemplum: Aug. de civit. Dei, lib. 16. cap. 30* for a season against corruption, a preservative against Apostacy. This Tragedie, when fresh and new, was the conversion, and confirmation of sundry Worthies: *Vergerius*, a daily spectator thereof, forsaking a rich Bishoprike of *Iustinopolis*, and tents of Antichrist, went to *Basil*, and dyed a worthy Protestant: many Nations had Eye-witnesses of their own Students, then in the Vniversitie of *Padua*, who penned the Story, the Copies whereof are frequently revived; our English ones were very defective, and now worn out of shops and hands; sundry Manuscripts of this abroad, imperfect; which mooved me to compare this labour of a worthy Gentleman (who faithfully translated it out of *Italian*, *French* and *Dutch letters*) with the *Latins* of *Cælius Secundus*, *Curio*, *Mattheus*, *Gribaldus*, professors of the *Civill Law* in *Padua*: *Sigesmond Gelous a Transilvanian*, *Henricus Scotus*, all daily visitors of *Spira*, and find it accord with them. Touching *Spira's* person, I find most learned writers do incline to the right and hopefull hand; moved by his sweet, humble, and charitable speeches; some few desperate ones excepted, that fell from him in some little agonies, which kept him fasting and watching about sixe moneths space eating nothing but what was forced down his throat. The summe of *Calvins* and *Borrhaus* their counsels (who writ largely of the use of this patern) is, that all learn to take heed of backsliding,

which

which God ſoul abhors, and not to dally with Conſcience, and hell on earth, if juſtly incenſed; more to be feared then the Spaniſh Inquiſition, or all the Strappadoes and torments in the world; and to take heed of *Spira's* principall Errors; which were, to diſpute with Satan over-buſily in time of weakneſs; eſpecially to reaſon, and conclude from preſent ſenſe, to Gods paſt Reprobation, and future Damnation; both which is hard, if poſſible, for any man to determine in his own, much more in others caſes: ſo commending thee to his grace, who is able to eſtabliſh thee to the end; I bid thee farewell, and hope well, while the ſpace of Grace laſteth; *Dum ſpiras, ſpera*; ſo mayeſt thou take good and no hurt, by the reading of this terrible Example.

(***)

FINIS.

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